

Their slender-

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[482] ness is deceptive, for their great strength lies in their legs, back, and neck, seen in their ability to carry loads of 45 kilograms (100 lbs.) and upwards, all day up and down hill without undue fatigue. Hair form is straight, coarse, and black. Gray hair or baldness are very unusual. Body hair, as far as could be observed, is negative.

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143 As many as 99.56 per cent of Tzeltal belong to blood type O, which is one of the highest frequencies registered in the Mayance area. According to Matson and Swanson (1959, p. 50), "In general the more isolated peoples such as the Lacandon, Tzeltal, Tzotzil and Cakchiquel show the highest frequency of the O gene." This condition is attributed to the absence of racial mixture.

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CULTURAL CONFIGURATION

- 621 Like the Indians in the highlands of Guatemala (Tax, 1937), the Tzeltal group themselves, in communities which are distinct social and cultural units, as is characteristic of the tribe. Each community has its well-defined lands, its own dialect forms, wearing apparel, kinship system, politico-religious organization, economic resources, crafts, and other cultural features. Any native of the region finds it easy to identify the origin of other Indians by noting their speech, wearing apparel, or the goods they sell. Solidarity between the members of each community is strong and becomes manifest in times of conflict with outside groups or in their way of gathering according to their "nationality" on fiestas or market days when people of other communities attend. On the other hand, no ethnic solidarity whatsoever exists. Each community restricts itself to its own affairs and nothing else; whatever happens to the other Tzeltal communities is something altogether apart.
- [628] The territorial limits of these communities do not always coincide with those of the municipalities, as in Guatemala. Various well-defined communities exist (in the terms described above) which belong to [P. 197-A]

291 a typical outfit with special characteristics.
184 For instance, the men of Tenejapa wear a hat of broad brim and pointed round crown, trimmed with thin ribbons of different colors. They also wear a dark chamarra or poncho with thin white stripes. The characteristic clothes of Cancuc are short, tight pants and a long shirt trimmed with red wool yarn. In Tierra Caliente the wool chamarra is not used nor is the variation in outfit so well defined.

Transportation

482 Men and pack animals are the principal
[487] carriers in the Tzeltal region, which is
[492] crossed in all directions by narrow trails.
482 Men carrying loads of 40-50 kg. usually
• 147 walk, in one day, as far as 8 leguas
(leagues). According to Blom and LaFarge
(1926-27, 2:386), the Tzeltal of the high-
lands are so strong "que ponen en vergüenza a una mula." In 1944 I observed Indians
[565] passing by my Yochib camp, carrying chairs
on their shoulders, in which a lady or a
child of upper-class Ladinos from Ocosingo
492 and Yajalon would be sitting. Pack animals
are now becoming common among the Tzeltal,
some of whom also have saddle horses.
491 Part of the Tzeltal-Tzotzil region is
crossed by the Pan-American Highway joining
Guatemala and Mexico City. In recent
years, roads called "brechas de penetración"
for motor vehicles are being constructed.
474 The natives of some communities (Oxchuc
493 and Chanal) have organized cooperatives
and purchased their own trucks.

804 Units of Measure

The system of measures still retains aboriginal characteristics. The main units are:

Nab: Distance between the end of the thumb and the middle finger extended.

Chutub: Distance between the end of the thumb and the index finger extended. It is equivalent to the *jeme*. The Indians do not use the *cuarta* (distance between the thumb and little finger extended).

[P 208-B]

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certain times of the year for ceremonies, such as those at Chakalchib, and formerly at Campomtik, to be mentioned later. The Bachajon hold their own ceremonies at their village.

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Physically, the Tzeltal, like all the Mayance Indians, are short, averaging probably about 160 centimeters (5 feet, 4 inches) for the men, and slightly less for the women. Their build is slender, with

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stringy muscles, except for a good development of the calves.

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Hands and feet are small and well-formed. Their slenderness is deceptive, for their great strength lies in their legs, back, and neck, seen in their ability to carry loads of 45 kilograms (100 lbs.) and upwards, all day up and down hill without undue fatigue. Taking in a tump-line a load under which they cannot rise from the floor.

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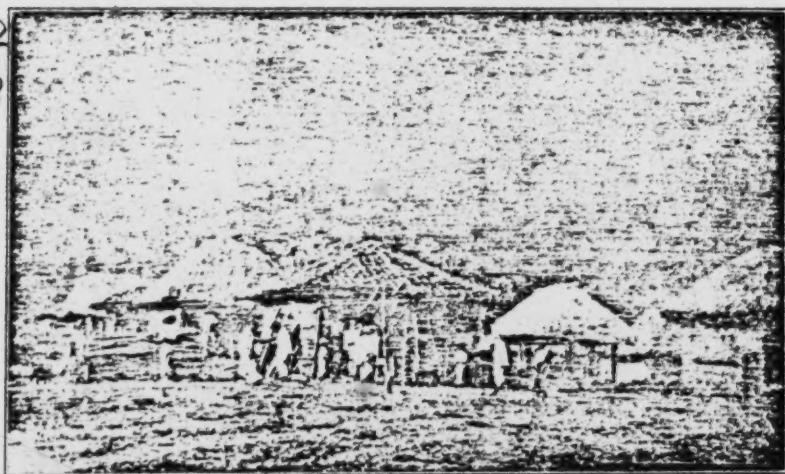


FIG. 278.—Finca Tecojá, Chis. Houses of Indians attached to the Finca.

147 without help, they will carry it with ease. The lifting power of their arms is less than that of Americans or Ladinos. Their headform is

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meso- to brachycephalic, and the cranium is small. Deformation in the shape of a marked depression just above the juncture of the hair-line and the forehead, due to the use of a tump-line from early infancy, may be responsible for the conical appearance of the top of the skull. Noses are, on the whole, mesorrhine and small, with little appearance of the famous "Maya Nose," and then in a narrow form, lacking the width of nostril seen in pre-historic figures. Prognathism is slight, alveolar prognathism being the more common, particularly in children. Hair form is straight, coarse, and black. Gray hair or baldness are very unusual. Body hair, as far as could be observed,